

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN, *Scottish Place-Names*, Batsford, 1976, 240 pp. + 21 maps, £4.95.

For many years the lack of a good general work on Scottish place-names has been very apparent. It is therefore good to see the results of over twenty years' work on the subject appearing in a concise and scholarly form. This volume will, it is hoped, be supplemented by a gazetteer on Scottish place-names which Professor Nicolaisen has in preparation at the present time. Together, these two books should provide solid guidelines for future work on the subject.

Nicolaisen's book relies on two main principles - 'the distribution of Scottish place-names in space and time' (p.x). It provides the reader with a discussion on the basic ingredients which make up the fabric of Scottish place-names, and the use of distribution maps of key elements is a valuable aid to study. Chapters on 'The Youngest Names', 'Early English Names', 'Scandinavian Names', and 'Gaelic Names' are accompanied by sections on 'The Written Evidence' and 'Distribution in Time and Space'.

Although the layman may find the book heavy going at times, those who are involved in name studies in a more active way will welcome the manner in which this complex subject has been tackled by the writer. Much of the research is new, although Nicolaisen states that a good deal of it has appeared in various scholarly articles published over the past dozen years or so. This does not lessen its appeal or its authority. It is a book deserving a permanent place in the history of onomastic literature.

IAN FRASER

BARTHOLOMEW, *Gazetteer of Britain*, compiled for John Bartholomew and Son Ltd. by Oliver Mason, 1st ed. 1977, xlvi + 271pp. + 128 maps, £9.50.

The *Gazetteer of Britain*, a very handsome book with splendid maps and statistical diagrams, replaces the long-running *Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles*. It is designed to be up-to-date, particularly in regard to the recent, lamentable re-organisation of local administration (each place is located in its new 'county'), the change to metrication (distances are given in kilometres as well as miles), and so on. Most places are now also identified by a National Grid reference, so that by its greater coverage of the names the *Gazetteer of Britain* is superior both to the *Gazetteer of England* (David and Charles, 1972, also by Oliver Mason), and to the Ordnance Survey *Gazetteer* of the quarter-inch series maps, which omits the names of some quite sizeable places only because there was not enough space for them on the crowded quarter-inch maps. I have never understood why it was the quarter-inch and not the one-inch series that was chosen as the basis for the O.S. gazetteer.

Not that even the O.S. one-inch maps are immune from arbitrary erasures. In a recent letter to *The Times* (5.11.77), Margaret Gelling pointed out that in the 1967 edition of sheet 131 the name of the ancient parish of Ipsley

had been removed (Ipsley having become part of the new town of Redditch), and she wondered how many other names of ancient settlements were being quietly eliminated by the map-makers. Such actions unwittingly threaten the survival of still useful names and it is sad to report that Bartholomew's new *Gazetteer* is making its own contribution to this reduction of our onomastic heritage. It is markedly less comprehensive than its predecessor, not only from the entirely proper excision of Irish place-names but from the exclusion of large numbers of British hamlets, 'seats', and localities that had been included in the old *Survey Gazetteer* (9th edn. 1942, repr. with supplement 1966). In consequence, Ipsley and the names of many similar places are now missing from both the most popular standard map series and our major topographical gazetteer. Do the producers of these authoritative works fully realise the significance of their actions for the future survival of individual place-names? And is there no publisher who can design a more comprehensive gazetteer as a commercial proposition?

There is one other criticism to make of this otherwise excellent reference work, and that concerns the glossary of place-name elements, a traditional feature of Bartholomew's gazetteers. While the Scottish material has been revised (with the assistance of Ian Fraser and William Gillies of the University of Edinburgh, though this is not acknowledged in the *Gazetteer*), the English material has not. The latter is still based, believe it or not, on Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places* (2nd edn. 1873), as one can tell from entries like "By, Byr (Scand.), a dwelling place. Other forms; *bere, beer, and bear*; e.g. Aylesbere, Bere Alston, Beardon, Bearhaven, Whitby, Duncansby", or at the other end of the alphabet "Wick (A.S.), a village, and also a marsh; (Norse), a bay. Salt was obtained by evaporation in bays, and hence the name wick or wich was given to inland places where there was salt; e.g. Droitwich, Wickham, Wicklow" (and Wicklow, publisher please note, is no longer to be found in the gazetteer itself, for obvious reasons). Such an antiquated confusion of facts and fancies should not be given currency in 1977, and Bartholomew will surely take the opportunity in a second edition to bring all the *Gazetteer's* information up to date.

PETER McCLURE

P. H. REANEY, *A Dictionary of British Surnames*, 2nd edn. with corrections and additions by R. M. Wilson, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, lxiv + 398 pp., £13.50.

The late Dr. Reaney's classic work has been extended by some 700 names (so Prof. Wilson informs the reader) and many entries have been revised. One cannot really expect the publishers to tell us which names these are (and they don't), but those who already possess the first edition and cannot afford the new may glean what they need from a borrowed copy by looking closely at the print, which for new entries and revisions is noticeably finer than for unaltered entries. New names include a number of extra Scottish ones from Black's *Surnames of Scotland* e.g. Grierson, Macartney, McClure, Ogilvie), some Welsh ones (e.g. Batha, Baugh, Parry, Tudor), and a much larger number of English ones, mostly from French and British place-names (Ainsley, Bickerstaff, Eggleston, Huxley, Maxwell, Nugent, Plunknett, Raleigh, Wilby, and so on), but others also from unusual occupations (Ladler, Officer, Tozer, etc.), personal names (Hulbert, Stiddolph), and nicknames (Funk, Kellog, Twiceaday - not what it looks like). Many entries have been re-written and

new or alternative explanations suggested (see e.g. Gelling, Offer, Pannaman, Petter). Often alterations correct a spelling (as in the entry for Plaistow) or a citation (see Prettijohn) or a date (Plummer, Pottinger) or more fussily the syntax (Port), the punctuation (Poucher), or the typography (Proudfoot, Pryke).

There is much to be grateful for and much to be enjoyed in Prof. Wilson's revision. At the same time, the two major weaknesses of this great work remain, to some extent inevitably. First, as anyone who studies surnames in their local context soon discovers, Reaney's magpie methods often led to arbitrary and sometimes to wholly erroneous use of Middle English surnames to support particular etymologies of modern names. The other fault is the uneven coverage of names in the different countries and regions. Common Irish surnames are still very inadequately represented in the new edition, a fact which is not made less regrettable by the inappropriate use of the term "British" in the dictionary's title. The various regions of Britain are less obviously under-represented, but there are plenty of well-known surnames not yet included. Certain readers may be justifiably disappointed not to find Fraser, Geddes, or McKinley (though all three are treated in Black's *Surnames of Scotland*), or Broderick (see Ewen's *History of Surnames*, 255), or Elrington, or Spufford - above all, the innumerable surnames from English place-names need more space still. It is not as if one is crying for the moon. Certainly there are generations of research to be done yet, and of course the economics of publishing almost forbid ideal completeness, even if it were academically realisable. But the publisher's claim on the dust jacket (not Prof. Wilson's claim) that they have endeavoured 'to make the work as comprehensive as possible' does seem a trifle disingenuous. Reaney himself stated in the first edition that he had omitted 4000 names in his own (hardly exhaustive) collection; about 700 names, not all from that collection, have now been added, a mark of progress, but not the end of the journey by a very long way.

PETER McCLURE

RICHARD McKINLEY, *Norfolk and Suffolk Surnames in the Middle Ages*, English Surnames Series II, Phillimore, 1975, xiii + 175 pp., £5.25.

Like its predecessor, this second volume of the English Surname Series is not concerned so much with the etymological aspects of names as with the evidence that surnames provide of social and occupational patterns, geographical mobility, and family history. Even when restricted to these and similar concerns, medieval surnames offer such vast and complex evidence that it is remarkable how slim a volume this is, dealing as it does with the surnames of a region comprising two of the larger and most populous counties of medieval England. Mr. McKinley achieves this by being rigorously selective and by arguing in a highly concentrated but always careful manner. Two of the most valuable chapters are the first and the last, on 'The Rise of Hereditary Surnames' and 'Social Class and its Influence'. The detailed analyses of the first of these take our understanding of the relative fixity and fluidity of naming in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries significantly further than the familiar generalisations in Reaney's *Dictionary and Origins of English Surnames*, while the last chapter usefully broaches a subject which has been unduly neglected in the past.

The middle chapters discuss different categories of surnames and their regional (non-linguistic) character. The most substantial is the one on

'Locative Surnames' (surnames from place-names), a closely argued essay which uses both individual histories and statistical analysis of the distribution of surnames to demonstrate, for example, that there was 'a great deal of population movement over short distances' (p. 89). It is curious however, that the detailed investigation of migration distances is restricted to movement purely internal to Suffolk. The borders of counties, unless they coincide with geographical or political obstacles, are not barriers to migration, and the distinction between a place of origin this side or that side of the Suffolk boundary is surely irrelevant, even to the business of defining the indigenous characteristics of Suffolk surnames. It is unfortunate that it also renders the statistics less suitable for comparative work. Distances purely internal to one county are too much influenced by the unique dimensions of that county to be properly compared with the distances of migration internal to any other county. It would be interesting, for example, to know whether Norfolk surnames from place-names show up the same patterns of migration as the Suffolk ones. An uneven treatment of different areas of East Anglia is noticeable here. It is nevertheless an admirably meaty chapter, not least because it provides evidence that some distinctively regional names may have originated in a single family. The study of the geographical spread of individual surnames in relation to family ramification is clearly going to be one of the major contributions of the English Surname Survey at Leicester.

The remaining chapters pursue much the same line of enquiry. There is a survey of 'Surnames derived from Occupation, Status, or Office', an essay on 'Toponymics' (a term McKinley applies to names like *atte Hill*), and another on 'Surnames derived from Personal Names'. In all of these, McKinley keeps his eye firmly on his central interest, the growth and ramification of family names. It does, however, entail a surprisingly brief treatment of such a large subject as surnames from personal names, and one wishes that use could at least have been made of Dr. Seltén's *Anglo-Saxon Heritage in Middle English Personal Names: East Anglia 1100-1399* (Lund 1972). Admittedly, McKinley's book plies a very different course from that we have become accustomed to in Lund Studies in English, and up to a point this is an advantage. McKinley has some very important things to say, which are perhaps best argued in separation from more linguistic concerns. On the other hand, it is through philological study that medieval surnames are made fully exploitable for demographic work, and one cannot help suspecting that a good deal of material which would have been grist to McKinley's mill has perforce been missed. Is it too much to hope that economic historians and philologists will one day actively co-operative in the study of medieval surnames? The benefits would be substantial and mutual. In the meantime Mr. McKinley's thoughtful and thought-provoking book leaves one looking forward to more of its kind.

PETER McCLURE

TOPONOMIA HIBERNIAE

General. Under this title is being published a collection of placenames from the south and west of Ireland where rugged terrain and the dense Gaelic-speaking population which survived down to the present century, combined to create a situation where such names proliferated. It is estimated that the material collected by the author over the past fifteen years will occupy some twenty-five volumes (of 200 or more pages each), apart from a number of additional volumes of indexes and analysis.

Oral Material. The basic evidence consists of phonetic renderings of all versions of each name, as recorded in the field. These are almost invariably accompanied by a description of the features to which the names refer, including precise location when possible. Local traditions as to the origin and meaning of names are presented, together with an account of events and beliefs associated with places. In this way the material lends itself to specialised investigation not only by the toponymist but also by the social historian and geographer, the folklorist, the dialectologist and the archaeologist.

Documentation. As the majority of these names are previously unrecorded an attempt has been made to supply historical perspective by fully documenting all references to placenames from the records of the original Ordnance Survey of the 1830's, and from a limited number of authors of that or a slightly earlier period. Earlier references to names of townlands and other places with a historical background have been excluded from the present series, as preparations are in hand by the author for the treatment of this type of material in a separate work, requiring as it does different methods and presentation.

Layout & Reference Aids. The arrangement of names is according to the Irish (Gaelic) forms, alphabetically, as follows: minor names within townlands, townlands names within civil parishes, and the latter within baronies. Townlands can be located on accompanying maps by means of numbers, and on the 6" Ordnance Survey maps by means of the sheet-numbers supplied with each townland.

Informants' initials accompany each phonetic version of a name, and a list is supplied which gives the age, occupation and address of these informants, together with an indication of linguistic status. Checking of information and its context is made possible by the provision of the numbers of tapes on which the material was recorded. These tapes are kept in the Ordnance Survey, and the material is being published with the permission of the Director.

Significance to Non-specialist. It is to be hoped that this undertaking, with its strong emphasis on oral sources, will make a significant contribution to onomastic science not only in Ireland, where the material has been salvaged almost on the point of extinction, but in other countries where it may be of value for comparative studies. While the evidence from written sources is in English, the fact that oral evidence is almost exclusively in Irish should not deter those ignorant of the language. The methodical presentation, phonetic renderings, and English translation provided with (practically) each name should ensure that any difficulties in this respect are minimal.

It is to be noted that the official Anglicised versions of names accompany the Irish versions, when available. An index of Anglicised townland names enables the investigator to locate these names in the body of the text should they be the starting point of his enquiry.

Author. The author of this work is Breandán Ó Cíobháin, Higher Placenames Officer with the Ordnance Survey, who has been engaged in research for an Coimisiún Logainmneacha (Irish Placenames Commission) since 1962. He is a member of the Council for Name Studies in Gt. Britain & Ireland and was formerly secretary of an Cumann Logainmneacha (Irish Placenames Society) and editor of its journal, *Dinnseanchas*, to which he has contributed numerous articles. He has lectured and broadcast on the subject of Irish placenames.

Publication. While most of the usual difficulties attendant on an enterprise of this scope and nature can be said to have been satisfactorily overcome, mention must be made of the one great obstacle remaining - in the hope of eliminating it. To date no financial assistance from public or private sources has been forthcoming. For this reason, the support of individuals and institutions who attach value to fundamental research in the field of placenames will be specially welcome.

The first volume, covering the Barony of Dunkerron North, Co. Kerry, will be published on April 7th, 1978, price £13.50, and should be of particular interest to the non-specialist, dealing as it does with perhaps the most rugged and beautiful part of Ireland, stretching from the Killarney lakes westwards to Glencar and including Carrantuohil (Ireland's highest mountain), the famous Gap of Dunloe and the Black Valley. Nine more volumes are in typescript and material for the remaining volumes is being processed.

Commendation. Among those who wish to express their support for the publication are Right Rev. Monsignor Eric Mac Fhinn, Chairman of an Coimisiún Logainmneacha Dr. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Chairman of an Cumann Logainmneacha Professors T. Ó Máille, T. Ó Concheanainn, B. Mac Aodha, G. Mac Niocaill, all members of an Coimisiún Logainmneacha (Placenames Commission), Professors P. Ó Riain, G. Mac Eoin and M. Ó Murchú of the Celtic Depts. of Cork, Galway and Dublin (T.C.D.) respectively, and F. J. Byrne, Prof. of Early Mediaeval Irish History in Dublin (U.C.D.). Members of the Council for Name Studies in Gt. Britain & Ireland have expressed their general support.

Purchase. Copies of volume I may be obtained from An Foras Duibhneach, 4 Faiche na Sceach, Caisleán Cnucha, Dublin, price £13.50. Post and packing: Ireland and U.K. 35 pence; Europe and North America 75 pence.

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- W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "Celtic Toponymics in Scotland", *Word*, 28 (1976), 117-139. (Please add to the list on p.12 of No. 1 of this issue of NOMINA.)
- Fran C. Chalfant, *Ben Jonson's London: a Jacobean Placename Dictionary*, University of Georgia Press, 256 pages, \$13.50.
- Kenneth Cameron, *English Place Names*, 3rd edn. with supplement, Batsford, 1977.
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